

WHOLE NO. 6741.

A BLAST FROM THE ARCTIC REGIONS.

THE GREAT FROST OF 1855.

A Snow Storm of Thirty-six Hours Duration.

ITS EFFECTS IN THE CITY.

Appearance of the Streets and Docks, the Ferries and the Railroads.

Accounts of the Storm from all Parts of the Country.

The intense cold of Wednesday terminated in one of the fiercest snow storms which we have had for several years. We were congratulating ourselves upon the comparatively mild winter with which we were favored, and were looking forward with the most pleasing anticipations to the near approach of spring, when we were suddenly visited by a frost which has not been equaled in severity during the past ten years. The mercury, which hardly once in a decade falls below zero in our city, fell several degrees below that point on Wednesday night, while the thermometer in Vermont and other Northern States indicated a temperature as low as thirty degrees below zero.

As if some great revolution had taken place on the surface of our planet, and that New York and Nova Zemba had changed latitudes. Who has not thought of the terrors of the Arctic regions, as he shivered under the keen blast, and of the perils to which those daring adventurers who left our port two long years ago in search of the last navigator, are now exposed?

Though it is seldom that we have such intensely cold weather as we experienced during the present week, what is it to that which they are subject? Away up in the regions of almost perpetual winter, where the powers of nature seem paralyzed, the brave, self-reliant commander of the Advance, and his little crew, are now perched on the ice, huddled together, and shivering with cold, amidst treacherous ice fields, at the mercy of the winds. How often their thoughts revert to home, and to the friends they left behind them, and how seldom we think of the bitter winds which sweep down upon us from the north. Let us hope that before another winter passes, he and the companions who have shared the dangers with which he is beset will return, and that we may have the pleasure of welcoming him once more among us.

The weather moderated considerably on Thursday morning, since when it continued snowing almost without intermission, up to a late hour last night. The average depth of the snow is about twelve inches, but in some places, where it has been drifted by the wind, it is five or six feet deep. The wind, indeed, has played some curious freaks with it, piling it in some places up in huge banks, while in other portions of the streets the unbroken snow presents a strong contrast to the uniform white which surrounds them. The areas on one side have been filled with it, but on the other it has been more sparingly distributed, and the same favorable contrast is visible during the night in drifting through the crooked streets of the city, and the no small annoyance and discomfort of careful housekeepers. The snow, in its usual impenetrable state, described the shape of a London fog, but we doubt if it could surpass the freaks of a real, genuine New York wind. Now it sweeps along the houses top, and the pedestrians beneath are enveloped in a cloud of snow. Now it whistles in the air to the height of twenty feet or more, forming a perfect "snow spray" while on door steps, window panes, cars, awnings, signs, lamps and everything exposed to it, it is formed into the most grotesque shapes. Put your ear to this telegraphic noise, and as it sweeps along the wires, you will hear sounds as sweet and plaintive as those ever evolved from the strings of an organ; the trees, too, vibrate with its sweet, plaintive melody, while from church spires, chimneys, and fire towers, it calls forth a deep monotone. But it was with a gentle breeze, when compared with those rough, boisterous winds with which we are usually, and whose courses are land is marked by wreck and ruin. It is not of the poor have to complain, but of the frost which made their poverty more intolerable and their miserable dwellings still more miserable. Who can tell of the sufferings of that destitute woman whose feeble body was found lying beneath the scanty covering with which she vainly endeavored to protect herself from the bitter cold of Wednesday night. To see its effects upon the poor, one must visit those localities where they live, and look into their wretched habitations—must see the miserable fire at which they vainly attempt to warm themselves, and the scanty clothing that wraps their freezing limbs. One poor fellow was emerging from a basement that seemed more fitted as a dwelling for swine than a habitation for a human being. He was evidently one of the unemployed mechanics, of whom there are thousands in this city reduced to the same condition. His appearance was that of a man who had been in the snow for some time, and his face was as red as a beet. He was shivering with cold, and his hands were frozen. He was unable to give any account of himself, and he was unable to give any account of himself.

With a stern patience, scorning weak complaint, he bared his heart against the biting wind.

How different the scene where he was an actor, from that presented by the Fifth avenue, where the children of wealth, locked up in their palatial mansions, surrounded themselves with all the luxuries which riches can procure, and laugh at the terrors of winter. What care they for the cold, piercing wind, when they are in their magnificent sleighs, wrapped in warm furs? For them, winter only brings new recreations—for that which may be death to the poor is to the rich only a change of pleasure. But even to the poor it is not without some benefit—thousands who are out of work have been enabled to obtain temporary employment in clearing away the snow from the doors and off the paths in the parks and other public places. In this way some make two or three dollars of a morning, while all are able to handle a broom or a shovel could make themselves independent of the soup kitchens for two or three days at least. It was a gratifying sight to see the eagerness with which they went to their work when they were so fortunate as to succeed in their application to the housekeeper. The clean sidewalks yesterday morning bore evidence how well they performed their task, and will, we hope, as a recommendation for them hereafter.

Ten o'clock at night, and the snow still falling, without the slightest prospect that it will stop before morning.

Fast falls the dewy shroud, the downy flakes descending with never-ceasing lapse, softly alighting upon all below, Assimilate all objects.

Not a star peeps out from the sky. The thermometer is at zero, and the snow is falling fast, and there is as yet no indication that the storm will cease before morning. The city all day long and far into the night was musical with the sound of the sleigh bells, and the streets were crowded with what the poet aptly calls "wheels indebted to no wheels." On Broadway and the avenues the carnival was revived; and the hearty cheer and joyous laugh that rang out from the frosty air as the merry parties dashed past each other, proved that to the snow was a most welcome visitor. How long it will remain in a fit condition for sleighing, we will not venture to predict, but it will be some weeks before the streets will be entirely free from it. Although the frost by which it was preceded was something to talk about, we trust it will be many years before we have such another.

Last night at eleven o'clock the mercury stood at 25 degrees below zero, showing a difference of over 30 degrees between it and the temperature of Wednesday. From the following table, which we obtain from "DeLafontaine's Record of the Thermometer," it will be seen that the cold in this city was more intense than has been known for several years—

| Date | Thermometer | Wind |
|------------------|-------------|------|
| 1845.....Jan. 17 | 17 deg. | W. |
| 1846.....Jan. 13 | 14 deg. | W. |
| 1847.....Jan. 13 | 15 deg. | W. |
| 1848.....Jan. 13 | 15 deg. | W. |
| 1849.....Jan. 13 | 15 deg. | W. |
| 1850.....Jan. 13 | 15 deg. | W. |
| 1851.....Jan. 13 | 15 deg. | W. |
| 1852.....Jan. 13 | 15 deg. | W. |
| 1853.....Jan. 13 | 15 deg. | W. |
| 1854.....Jan. 13 | 15 deg. | W. |
| 1855.....Jan. 13 | 15 deg. | W. |

On the 4th of January, 1849, the thermometer was 4 degrees above zero at sunrise, and on the 5th the mercury stood at one degree below that point. The latter day may be remembered, was from our city, and people walked across the ice from this city to Brooklyn.

The following table gives the comparative degrees of temperature at the different places named, showing how the cold varied in intensity here and elsewhere—

| Place | Temperature |
|---------------|--------------------|
| New York City | 2 deg. below zero. |
| Poughkeepsie | 12 |
| Troy | 12 |
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